527 or two. The big bell also began to ring about midnight and was rung intermittently all the
796 rest of the night. Early in the morning there was a Low Mass and at 9 a. m. a High Mass.
[793] These were performed by the priest as part of his duties and were not the special Masses paid for by the town. About noon a few members of the Cherán band gathered in front of the priest's house and played for a time, continuing intermittently the rest of the afternoon.

527 Much activity was under way in the plaza, although the main market day would not be
[443] until Sunday. Vendors of shoes, clothing, cakes, candles, candy, apples, peanuts, chiles, dried fish, and painted wooden bowls in Quiroga style were added to those already present. A
[265] gambling game was set up. The booths for
[275] the liquor and food shops were mostly set up on this day. Comments implied that the girls
[548] running the booths were all prostitutes, but all the booths were completely open. In any case, the booths are the center for most of the drunkards and most of the fights and disorder associated with the fiesta. The *castillo* was nearly complete (pl. 6, upper left). On this day also, the church was cleaned up and decorated. A few began working at the bull ring, digging up old posts and clearing away weeds, while others transported new posts and logs from the various *barrios*.

All day Saturday vendors arrived. Most of
[443] them merely located their space and unpacked their animals, but did not unpack their goods (pl. 5, upper left). A great many people arrived, and the plaza and nearby streets were crowded. A large carousel or merry-go-round
[529] was set up in a patio behind the *municipio*, while a smaller one was placed on one of the side streets.

527 In the evening, shortly before dusk, the com-
533 missioners and their assistants went to the calvary, the chapel at the east edge of town, to meet the bands coming from Nahuatzen and Pichataro. The bands had not arrived by dark, when one of the most violent thunderstorms anyone could remember deluged the party. It was said there were no ceremonies of greeting ordinarily and that the commissioners merely greeted their band and led it to one of the houses for supper. Certainly, there were no ceremonies that night.

838 The individual in question was also said once to have lived with another woman who did the work in the household while the former acted like a man. It is also believed that she is a "man" during one month and a "woman" the next, the change being regulated by changes in the moon. During the month she is a "man" she is said to go through the streets at night, trying to entice girls to her house, or else she stands at the door of her house and offers presents to girls who will come in. At one time the woman married and had two children but later was widowed. That the individual is [158] emotionally unstable is indicated by her claim to have once "died" and come to life again, after which she brought many people messages from their dead relatives whom she had encountered in the other world.

No cases of men dressing as women or men who had homosexual relations were encountered, but there evidently are occasional instances. The only specific reports encountered were of subadolescent boys who showed a preference for doing women's work. One example cited was of a boy who washed dishes, swept, made tortillas, and did other housework. His voice was high-pitched and he refused to fight. Later, however, the boy's voice changed and he married.

● 548 Some prostitution exists in Cherán. There are several houses of assignation operated by elderly women who know the accessible women. Men go to these houses and the old woman then takes a message to some girl or woman. The younger women are often the daughters of older women who have taken this way of life, but sometimes the girls from other families will visit such houses clandestinely. Such girls become known among the unmarried men and usually have difficulty in marrying. Often they attempt to force boys to marry them by claiming to have been "stolen" by a boy and lodging complaints with the mayor, often abetted by their parents. If the girl's reputation is bad, the boy may be put in jail as a discouragement to boys who might be tempted to steal a girl without marrying her, but the boy will not be forced to marry.

The patrons of such houses are usually bachelors and older unmarried youths. Some whose wives are pregnant also visit such houses

548 occasionally. Payment, usually 50 centavos, is given to the girls prostituting themselves, part of which is given to the woman who lends her house for the purpose and arranges the meeting.

864 Despite the existence of prostitution, it is claimed that most young people before marriage have no sexual experience. Girls particularly are believed to be relatively innocent, although obviously all have knowledge of the nature of the sexual act in a setting as full of animals as is Cherán. Boys are believed to be somewhat more sophisticated because, even though they may not have visited houses of prostitution, details are talked about among them. After marriage, aside from the prohibitions on intercourse during pregnancy and confinement and
833 during menstruation, there are no restrictions on sexual relations between husband and wife. There seem to be no ideas about a fixed interval or ideal interval between sexual relations and informants thought relations were "frequent" but would not suggest any time periods. In general, the subject of sex relations proved embarrassing and informants seemed purposely to avoid definite statements.

583 The customary preliminary to marriage is for the groom to "steal" (*robar*) his bride. Virtually everyone of the older and the more articulate men in town deprecate the custom and many assert that it is a recent development. Nevertheless, no one could name a time when the custom was not practiced. Moreover, it is to be found in many other Tarascan towns, perhaps in all of them, and is regarded as an old form at Mestizo Chilchota, where most marriages also begin by stealing. Although occasionally the groom asks for the bride instead of stealing her, such cases are exceptional and seem more likely to be the innovation than does the stealing of the bride.

Only on very rare occasions is the bride stolen without her consent. Generally the entire performance, including setting the time and place, has been arranged beforehand between the bride and groom, although it is good form for the girl to struggle or at least to pretend to do so. The groom enlists the
[561] cooperation of some of his age mates and they assist in carrying off the girl and in blocking pursuit. The usual time for carrying off a girl is on a Sunday when she comes out of church